

**Name of Standard:** ISO Standards 23081 (Metadata for records) and 26122 (Work process analysis for records)

**URL:**

<https://committee.iso.org/sites/tc46sc11/home/projects/published/iso-23081-metadata-for-records.html> and <https://www.iso.org/standard/43391.html>

**Related Resources:** <http://www.scriptiesonline.uba.uva.nl/scriptie/432595> (comparison of ISO standards, MoReq2010 etc. to ISDF, in Dutch)

**Summary (1-2 sentences):**

These two ISO standards provide records management professionals with guidelines for records management metadata, and work process analysis for designing records systems. ISO 30301 also offers basic guidelines for metadata in a 'management system for records' (MSR), as do standards like MoReq2010 - but regrettably I don't know of any examples of this standard being used.

**Discussion:**

**1. Background (a few words)**

- a. **What kind of a standard is it? (Conceptual model, ontology, ...)**  
Conceptual model and guidelines.
- b. **Who maintains this standard?** ISO
- c. **How old is it?** Respectively 2017/2009/2011 and 2008.
- d. **What is its stated purpose and scope?** To provide a framework, guideline and self-assessment for design and implementation of records management metadata; and to provide a guideline for (functional and sequential) work process analysis for records systems.

**2. Relation to Archival Description (1-2 sentences)**

- a. **expand on 1d** Records management metadata maintained in organisations are in a way a 'precursor' for archival description. In the Netherlands (at least) metadata models based on ISO 23081 are used to map metadata and files for export from document/records management systems and process applications to the digital archival management system at (at the moment mainly) the National Archives. You can find more on this [here at the National Archives](#). You can find a comparison made by Peter Horsman of the local government metadata model and the ICA standards [here](#). (Both are in Dutch, I'm afraid.)  
I haven't come across actual use cases for ISO 26122.
- b. **If archival description is outside the stated purpose/scope, explain how it could be used for archival metadata** The metadata design prescribed by ISO 23081 covers among others:
  - i. records/files/series/archives, related to ISAD/EAD;
  - ii. agents, related to ISAAR/EAC-CPF;
  - iii. and functions/activities/processes, related to ISDF.

3. **What it does well (1-2 sentences)** Provides a world-wide standard for the records management community. (And actually works quite well, once you get the hang of it.)
4. **Shortcomings (1-2 sentences)** The models based on ISO 23081 in the Netherlands are viewed as complicated and cumbersome by many who try to implement them, mainly in local government. Personally, I think this is mainly due to lack of published examples from practice.  
Another shortcoming: people applying ISO 23081 initially expect the standard to provide a solution for all metadata challenges - and they will be disappointed.
5. **Possible Impact on Structured Archival Data (2-5 sentences)** If applied well according to a metadata model based on ISO 23081, records management metadata could (undoubtedly with additional context description) be used as a direct source for archival description (at least EAD and EAC-CPF), when exported from the original applications / management systems. If a method like the one detailed in ISO 26122 is used to describe the functions and work processes of an organisation (like say, in a file plan or information architecture), these descriptions could also provide a valuable source of context information in structured archival data.